

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 EB-07

COME-00 INT-05 ERDA-05 FEAE-00 /044 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4991

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY KIGALI UNN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EMIN, BY, RO

SUBJECT: PROGRESS IN SEARCH FOR URANIUM IN BURUNDI

1. FRIENDLY MEMBER OF UNDP MINERALS TEAM TELLS US THAT
SIZABLE AND INCREASING EFFORT IS BEING PUT INTO INVESTIGATION
OF URANIUM DEPOSITS IN BURUNDI. MOST IMPORTANT POTENTIALLY
IS AREA JUST SOUTH OF KAYANZA (NORTHWESTERN BURUNDI) WHERE
SURFACE RADIATION IS VERY HIGH AND WHERE SOME ORE SAMPLES
GIVE CONCENTRATION OF OVER ONE PERCENT METAL. CONSENSUS OF
EXPERTS IS THAT "IT IS NINETY-FIVE PERCENT SURE" THAT DEPOSIT
WILL PRODUCE TWENTY TO FORTY THOUSAND TONS OF PROCESSED METAL.
(SEVENTY PERCENT CONCENTRATION WAS MENTIONED, BUT IT IS NOT
CLEAR THAT IT WAS IN REFERENCE TO FOREGOING TONNAGE.) IN
ANY CASE, EXPERTS CLAIM THAT IF FURTHER DRILLING OVER NEXT
FEW MONTHS REMOVES REMAINING UNCERTAINTIES, THIS DEPOSIT
COULD BE "FOURTH LARGEST IN WORLD".

2. MINOR URANIUM DEPOSIT, BUT STILL WORTH EXPLORING, HAS
TURNED UP WITHIN MAIN NICKEL SITE AREA OF MUSONGATI IN CENTRAL
BURUNDI, AND TEAM HAS LOCATED MAIN BODY OF ALLUVIAL TYPE
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URANIUM DEPOSIT IN AREA ABOUT FIFTY MILES NORTH OF BUJUMBURA

IN FOOTHILLS ABOVE RUZIZI VALLEY PLAIN. NO CLAIMS ARE YET
MADE FOR POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE OF LATTER FIND.

3. ALMOST ALL OF URANIUM EXPLORATION, DRILLING, AND CHEMI-
CAL ANALYSIS IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY ROMANIAN GEOLOGISTS WHO
ARE PART OF ROMANIAN BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO BURUNDI, THOUGH
NOMINALLY ATTACHED TO UNDP. BOTH ROMANIANS AND BURUNDI GOVERN-
MENT ARE SHOWING EVER GREATER SECRETIVENESS ABOUT DISCOVERIES.
OUR SOURCE BELIEVES ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO GET EXCLU-
SIVE CONTRACT TO EXPLOIT URANIUM FINDS, BASED ON THEIR EXPER-
IENCE IN DOMESTIC PRODUCTION. WE DO NOT RPT NOT KNOW ENOUGH
ABOUT EITHER ROMANIAN TECHNICAL, COMMERCIAL, OR CAPITAL
INVESTMENT CAPABILITIES TO JUDGE WHETHER BUCHAREST COULD IN
FACT UNDERTAKE SUCH AN ENTERPRISE ON ITS OWN, OR WHETHER,
EVEN IF IT COULD, IT WOULD BE THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS COURSE FOR
BURUNDI OR FOR WEST.
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